

FAMILY FARM EMPOWERS EMPLOYEES

ABOUT STENSLAND FAMILY FARMS. "Not all milk is created equal," is a saying that rings true for Stensland Family Farms, a family-owned and operated dairy farm in Northwest Iowa. The Stensland family believes in providing people with local, fresh food that tastes delicious. Their mission is to inspire people to care about where their food comes from and to give them the quality food they deserve. What once started out as a 12-cow operation soon evolved into a dairy farm with over 200 cows. Today, the family not only operates a much larger herd of cows, but also runs a creamery and two stores—one on the farm in Larchwood, Iowa, and one nearby in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. With less than 30 employees, Stensland also has multiple robots working on the farm.

THE CHALLENGE. Experiencing rapid growth and new automation in their single source agricultural business, the Stensland family struggled with delegating new roles and responsibilities to their employees. The small, hardworking family was overwhelmed and needed help managing the increased workload. They also had many ideas for potential growth in the company, but they lacked direction on which areas to prioritize. The family reached out to South Dakota Manufacturing & Technology Solutions (MTS), part of the MEP National Network, for guidance.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. An MTS business advisor met with the Stensland family to discuss their ideas, putting a value on growth opportunities to determine which areas would be best to pursue. Next, they worked together to clearly define roles and responsibilities and match employees' duties with their expertise. The exercise provided more accountability and structure, helping Stensland employees complete their duties and day-to-day activities. It also empowered individual members to take on more responsibility and consider a wider variety of tasks. The family worked with MTS to strategize procedures, document protocol, and find more time to implement workforce development training.

In their time spent with MTS, the Stensland family has developed new habits and thought processes for managing staff more effectively. The family created a culture that values teamwork, innovation, and accountability to support their production of high quality dairy products.

"Working with MTS brought the insight and expertise needed to focus and manage the changes Stensland Family Farm was facing. Keith Deibert, Business Advisor, was very thorough in the strategy, answering all our questions and very willing to focus on our core issues, while providing follow-up during the process."

-Leah Moller, Owner

RESULTS



Gained a sense of direction on the expansion of their business



Clearly defined roles and responsibilities to hold people more accountable



Empowered employees with written procedures, protocols and training to increase productivity

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